

Radio Days



WTCC, WCCS and now WFCS 107.7-- and anywhere at wfcsradio.com

Vol. 3, Spring 2017

Editor

Paul Koscak '73

Contributors

Anna Battye '17

Elaine Miner '84

Larry Mucci '01

Inside Features

WFCS alum recalls Twisted Sister ■ When metal ruled ■ Station grows inside and out

First and early, WFCS still homecoming's opening act

Central's Homecoming 2016 started well before the coffee brewed for Saturday's morning brunch.

At 7 a.m. the studio door unlocked, the lights went on and the day's first official homecoming event kicked off as **Steve Strinie '83** (with his own cup of coffee) once again launched the morning block of WFCS alumni shows.

For alumni who were at Friday evening's reunions, it felt really early, but worth it.

By 8 a.m., Steve was no longer flying solo as WFCS alumni began arriving. Some brought vintage vinyl, others discs and a few had drives but no matter the medium it was all good music. The shows brought back familiar sounds that only radio club alumni could appreciate.



The voices haven't changed. If you were listening elsewhere you'd swear you just busted through a time warp. Each show offered **signature songs and artists** mixed with some radio club and Central recollections, promos for the day's homecoming events and some great memories.

Elaine Miner '84 (left) and Jeri Lynn Stephens '84 ham it up in Studio A during homecoming.

Other alumni stopped by to be there to enjoy the fun. Both the studio and the station's small lobby soon filled

and lots of greetings and anecdotes were traded over coffee, juice and pastries graciously provided by **Student Center Associate Director Sue Sweeney**.

Colin Burke '88, Karen Prado '88 and Jon Eastman '88 (Reddy Kilowatt) were among the WFCS alumni doing shows during Homecoming 2011. Enjoy the flashback: Colin, Jon, [Karen](#) (ctrl + click)

70 at 2017

Homecoming 2017 marks a huge radio club milestone--its 70th year: from 1947 to 2017--**seven decades strong**--and still making strides! The club began with a group of students who performed radio dramas, comedy and variety shows on Hartford-area stations. From 1947 to 1949, the radio club



produced a 15-minute show Saturdays on WDRC-FM (FM was considered experimental at the time), had a variety show in WKNB New Britain and once contributed to a drama on WTIC.

Before there was a radio station there was a radio club where members produced dramas and comedy.

The club became a college radio station in November 1949 as WTCC (Teachers College of Connecticut). The first mention of the upcoming station in The Recorder was in March that year announcing the WTCC student board

of directors. In September, The Recorder reported "the campus station was being completed."

Nick Klym '51 was the first general manager and **Lois Perry '50**, was treasurer. Nick was a paratrooper in World War II and actually wired the station. The studio ran lines that connected to small transmitters located in the few campus buildings at the time. It was a "carrier current" system that radiated an AM signal and the rest is history.

Broadcasting on WTCC from the old East Hall. Nick Klym is standing.

So there's a lot of legacy to celebrate this year. See you at **Homecoming 2017, Oct. 7 - 8.**



The next WFCS alumni gathering is blue

Mix food, a few brews and deep Moody Blues album cuts and what do you get? Fun.

The custom continues **Sunday, May 21**. Longtime WFCS broadcaster Steve Strinie hosts his popular Moody Blues party--nothing but three hours of the Blues from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. and all WFCS alumni are invited to take part.

Between sets you can broadcast your own MB trivia, along with WFCS, WCCS and CCSU anecdotes as far as **36 watts** will take them (For radio club alumni from the WCCS 670 AM or the 90.1 FM 10-watt era, 36 watts is like being on WABC!). Even if you're not a big MB fan, just stopping by the station is like old times. So...food, beer and a blast.

This year we have a select location, thanks to WFCS alumni **Dick Wiszniak**.

Here's the Moody Blues plan:

1 p.m., meet at Grand Pizza & Restaurant, 136 Main St. New Britain <http://www.grandpizzact.com/> (ctrl + click) Order the food you'd like for take out

1:30 p.m. or so, bring your food to the Elks Lodge, 60 Washington St., just a few blocks away. [Elks location & map](#) (ctrl + click)

The lodge is a private setting where we can all socialize. Refreshments, including alcoholic, can be purchased there.

4 - 4:30 p.m. Meet at the WFCS studio.

Hope you can join in from the start or anywhere along the way.

On 'The Edge' with furnishings, equipment, space

By Anna Battye '17, WFCS General Manager



2017 saw big changes at the station.

WFCS has grown and has established a new presence throughout CCSU. We've been the sound and source of music at almost every campus event this year as well as a few off-campus functions. With more than 50 DJs covering more than half of the scheduled airtime, the **station's visibility on campus has soared.**

Design by Darren Palumbo

We've updated a lot of the equipment and much of the music, including all of the station's compact discs, were digitized and uploaded into a cloud that's accessed from a laptop computer. There are folders for each genre. It was a labor-intensive project that took two months.

Smoother Sound

The new equipment creates greater efficiency and a smoother sound. We installed a Radio Data Systems (RDS) encoder. The device resembles a computer keyboard and allows a DJ to program songs, legal station IDs, updated public service announcements and even sound effects. For those listening to WFCS while driving, the **encoder will display the name of the song on the screen of the car's radio.** DJs can also use the device to create a music mix on the air. Mixes draw from multiple music sources--vinyl, discs, internet and a variety of storage devices--to create a single musical track, usually within a certain genre, offering listeners a musical experience few radio stations provide.

WFCS's vintage vinyl library has been reorganized alphabetically and now occupies one wall. Our website has also been updated to **wfcsrдио.com**, featuring a full schedule of shows along with the DJs and constantly renewed information.

Finally, the studio has a fresh look with all **new furniture and new office space**, expanding the station.

While these improvements have allowed WFCS to maintain quality college radio, our rebranding has given the station new standing: WFCS is now 107.7 The Edge!

New Identity

The Edge was inspired by our former catch phrases “Where the Music Still Matters” and “Far Left on the Far Right of the Dial.” Our previous General Manager **Joe Durant** and our current computer engineer **Darren Palumbo** coined the phrase “To get to where the music still matters you have to go all the way up to The Edge!” This adage stuck and shortened to The Edge.

Naming ourselves The Edge has made it easier for WFCS to be recognized on campus. We have become a hub for clubs to advertise their events and we have served many clubs and campus organizations. WFCS is a valued CCSU organization and we hope to continue our amazing growth.

Anna Battye majored in biomolecular science, minored in chemistry and plans to pursue a forensics career.



Continuing the legacy and making future memories--WFCS staff in Studio A pose on one of the station's new couches along with the station's new logo and sign. From left: Peter Varhol, long-time community volunteer and DJ; Tim Huffman '17, program director; Johnny Bazzano '18, one of the newest DJs; Victoria Minervino '19, public relations director; Nick Brazil '18, DJ; Sara Angelo '18, Radio 200 director; Anna Battye '17, general manager.

Rock star interview nets WFCS promo

By Elaine (Tirella) Miner '84

I have countless, awesome memories from my WFCS days, yet my interview with Twisted Sister's Dee Snider holds a special place in my heart.

First, some background.

While many of us in college during the early 1980s were bouncing to songs like Tommy Tutone's "867-5309 Jenny," and artists ranging from U2, David Bowie, Thomas Dolby, Culture Club, The Kinks, Pat Benatar, The Fixx, The Clash, Journey, Billy Idol, Prince, Michael Jackson, Bob Seger, and so many

others, there was another kind of bouncing crowd at that time--the **head bangers**.



These fans earned the moniker by their extreme head and body movements as they got lost in the rapidly growing music genre of the time--heavy metal, now on SiriusXM radio's Hair Nation '80s Hair Bands.

Twisted Sister and front man Dee Snider, second from right.

In 1984, Twisted Sister was a tri-state heavy metal band struggling to make

the big time. Then a rant heard around the world happened: "What do you want to do with your life?!" screamed actor Mark Metcalf on the band's first MTV video, "We're Not Gonna Take it." Metcalf later appeared in Twister Sister's "I Wanna Rock" video. Both videos rocketed the band to the top of Billboard's charts after pounding the club circuit for nearly ten years. (Mark Metcalf, is best known for his 1978 movie role in Animal House as the crazy ROTC leader, Doug Neidermeyer)

Loud and Obnoxious

Step back to 1983.

Twisted Sister routinely played The **Agora Ballroom** in New Haven and I was there every time they performed. I mustered up the courage to ask the manager to send me the two 45-rpm records the band recorded on a private label. I vowed to play them on my beloved college radio station, WFCS, then 98 FM on the dial. Yet my ultimate goal was to arrange an interview with Dee Snider, the loud and obnoxious front man whose bleached blonde hair was larger than any mane you'd ever seen and it had more curls than Goldilocks on steroids!



That opportunity happened one night at the West Hartford Agora.

After Twisted Sister wrapped their set, I waited around in hopes that the manager didn't forget the arrangement for me to interview Dee. I remember it well. The ballroom was now quite empty, the cleaning crew was in and the house lights were up.

Dee's stage persona

With my support group by my side--my boyfriend (now husband of 30 years) and my roommate, now a BFF of 35 years, (best friend forever)--I waited and waited, armed with a **WFCS recorder**.

Finally, Dee Snider appeared--the make-up washed off, in T-shirt and jeans. He recognized us as the fans always front and center at all their Connecticut shows. Dee was calm, pleasant and sincere, nothing at all like his loud on-stage persona. It was a stark reversal for those of us who frequented Twister Sister shows because it was commonplace that every other word coming out of Dee's mouth while on stage was an F bomb.

I was thrilled when Dee recorded two unforgettable WFCS station IDs: one for fun, to never grace the airwaves--"W.F.C.S-- f'ing cool station," and another to play immediately--"This is Dee Snider of Twisted Sister and you're listening to W.F.C.S!" He talked a bit about the band and how they would soon be traveling to England to record in Jimmy Page's studio (Guitarist Jimmy Page was a member of Led Zeppelin). Dee revealed that off stage he's pretty mellow, was married to his high school sweetheart and was just looking forward to getting coffee and going home to Long Island.

Head Bangers

I wrote Dee a thank you note, and on March 17, 1983, he wrote me back from England. Us old timer head bangers remember that Twisted Sister fans were referred to as SMFOTSS and later just SMFs. Refer to Wikipedia Twister Sister for the definition under the subtitle Club Days.

(Editor's comment: The 1969 release "Kick out the Jams" by the MC5 opens on a similar note.)



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My only regret is that no photos were taken during the interview. Ah, why didn't we bring a camera? I so wish we had iPhones back then!

Elaine Miner majored in communications and currently works at Yale New Haven Health.

Metal brought WFCS national fame

By Larry Mucci '01

I joined WFCS in the fall of 1996 and my first two years as a DJ was an **extremely exciting time** because the station was on a big popular upswing. Before the days of internet downloads and streaming, WFCS filled that void with alternate music formats. We generally shunned Top 40 groups and favored newer, unknown artists.

To gain and keep listeners, the station started block programming. The format provided a time every weekday for each WFCS music department to air its genre.

This was especially true of metal. While the genre was shunned by commercial radio stations in the mid 90s, WFCS drew dedicated metal music fans served by a very dedicated crew of metal DJs who were excited to have a platform for their music and an opportunity to draw more fans.

Metal's the long-running Sunday night block was so popular, the Metal Department added a 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. weekday block to reach teenagers just getting out of school and drive-time listeners.

Metal Man

Leading the metal brigade charge was Metal Director and WFCS General Manager Chip McCabe, a life-long metal fan. Chip had a passion for growing the metal music fan base and did a great job leading the metal department. Chip's enthusiasm motivated DJs to improve their shows and drove him to connect with record label promoters which bolstered the station's reputation in the music industry.

WFCS garnered a big gain in regular listeners, who not only kept the request line ringing constantly but supported the metal groups. WFCS's popular metal shows helped the artists we played sell a fair amount of records. That drew attention from the indie metal labels we serviced and the station managed to show up in the **Arbitron ratings**, a big achievement for a small college station.

We had a lot of great times in the studio doing our shows and impromptu late-night fill-in programs. There was a lot of great camaraderie as we shared the love of music. At the same time, WFCS's profile soared. Nationally recognized artists were interviewed and station staff was invited to concerts. Soon, WFCS started a tradition. During the 1997 Spring Week vacation the station sponsored Metalfest, two all-day outdoor metal concerts.

WFCS's **official sledge hammer** was used to set up the outdoor stage, autographed by Compos Mentis, one of the fest's bands. The hammer became a WFCS office decoration for a few years and occasionally used for shenanigans like in this photo. The following year, in addition to popular local groups, we booked some national acts including show headliner Crisis.

In 1998, the station's Metal department itself became a national act. WFCS earned the College Hard Rock Station of the Year Award and Chip McCabe was named Hard Rock Director of the Year by Gavin, a music industry magazine.



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Needless to say, we all felt a lot of pride in being nationally recognized. That visibility drew even more listeners and interest in our shows. It was pretty neat to pose for a picture that ended up on the front page of The New Britain Herald and the station profiled on the media.

Metalfests also took place in 2001, 2007, 2009 and 2015.

From 1999 to 2000 the station did a few big pushes for membership and ended up with over 50 DJs, but there was a very high turnover. Some DJs only lasted one semester, so the station began accepting community volunteers.



The WFCS Metal Department in December 2000 during a staff meeting in the DiLoretto basement lecture hall.

Not all members could be identified. From left Mike Polce (with gallon of water); Chip McCabe (hooded sweatshirt); Kevin Schremmer (beard, glasses); Brian Corrigan (kneeling); Art Barsch (crossed arms); Tony Espinoza (holding the "official" WFCS sledge hammer); Larry Mucci; and Christina Wojanowski (green jacket)

The other music departments--Alternative, Urban, Diversity and RPM--all had some excellent programming as well. It was great time to be involved with the club and to experience these exiting events. WFCS has given me a lot of great memories.

Larry Mucci majored in communications and works at ESPN in Bristol